

## OBITUARIES

JOHN GRANT CUNNINGHAM,  
B.A., M.B., D.P.H., 1890-1965

### AN APPRECIATION

With the passing of John Grant Cunningham on October 7, 1965, after a long illness, Canada has lost one of her most distinguished industrial physicians. Grant Cunningham, as he was known to his many friends, was a pioneer in the field of industrial medicine in North America, and one whose influence will be felt by succeeding generations. He was always quiet and unassuming, yet one had only to be with him for a short while before the depth of his knowledge and the breadth of his understanding made themselves felt. He was careful in his opinions and cautious to pronounce judgment, not only on matters of industrial medicine but in the wider field of life itself. Throughout his professional life he gave of himself unsparingly and asked little in return, save that the job was 'well done'.

John Grant Cunningham was born at Norwood, Ontario, the son of Andrew and Christina Williamson Cunningham. He graduated from the University of Toronto in 1912 with a Bachelor's degree in arts from the course in physiology and biochemistry. He continued with studies in medicine and was awarded an M.B. in 1915. He immediately enlisted and served overseas in the First World War with the Royal Army Medical Corps, where he attained the rank of Captain. On his return, he was appointed a member of the National Research Council of Canada Committee on Industrial Fatigue. As a result of the work of this committee, the Industrial Hygiene Division was formed under the Ontario Board of Health in 1920, with Dr. Cunningham as its first Director, a position which he held with distinction for the next 40 years. This division was the first of its type in Canada and the third to be formed in North America, similar governmental agencies having been formed in Ohio in 1913 and in New York in the following year. As Director and founder of the Ontario Division of Industrial Hygiene, he was largely responsible for the pre-eminent position this Division holds today. Owing to his efforts and leadership, a co-operative approach on common problems has been maintained with other agencies. He built the Industrial Hygiene Division with care and attention to detail, and the Division which he founded is today composed of the various professional supporting staff necessary for the initiation and maintenance of a complete industrial hygiene program. Dear to his heart was the development of an industrial medical service, and his prime consideration was always the application of the procedures of preventive medicine to the adult working population. In this connection he was largely responsible for the development of the Civil Service Health Centres in the Ontario Government.

Throughout his long association with industrial medicine Dr. Cunningham was always keenly interested in teaching, and his first appointment in the University of Toronto, several years before the opening of the School of Hygiene, was that of Lecturer in Industrial Hygiene in the Department of Hygiene and Preventive Medicine for the session 1920-1921.

In this he was closely associated with Dr. J. G. Fitzgerald, not only in the teaching activities of the Department but later in the development of the School of Hygiene. This association may have been stimulated by a common interest in preventive medicine. On Grant Cunningham's part, it took the form of encouraging physicians to have a concern for those aspects of preventive medicine which they, as general practitioners, could practise as part-time physicians to small industries. This interest in preventive medicine, particularly in the industrial field, was further exemplified



Dr. J. Grant Cunningham

by his participation, as a joint author, in a chapter on Industrial Hygiene in Dr. Fitzgerald's book, "An Introduction to the Practice of Preventive Medicine". On the establishment of the School of Hygiene in 1925 he joined the Department of Physiological Hygiene as Demonstrator, and in 1958 he became Head of the Department. Throughout his long association with the School of Hygiene he continued an active concern in research problems relating to health in industry. His association with early work on toxicology in the dry-cleaning industry and, more recently, in dusty areas of industry was widely known and readily supported by financial grants from industry. For many years he was Chairman of the Silicosis Referee Board, in which capacity he made many notable contributions to the eradication of pneumoconiosis in Ontario.

During the last war Dr. Cunningham was very active in the war effort. In 1941 at Winnipeg he was appointed Chairman of a new committee of The Canadian Medical Association, the Committee of Industrial Medicine. Through this committee he set up hygienic standards of war-time employment. He was instrumental in the printing of a booklet based upon these standards, which was greatly valued as a guide to industry at that time. He was also a member of the Personnel Procurement Board, a Federal project. In 1943 he presented to a select committee of the House of Commons a report on the relationship of industrial medicine to health insurance. From 1948 to 1958 he

represented The Canadian Medical Association in the field of industrial medicine at the World Health Organization. He was also a member of the Permanent International Committee of the Congress of Occupational Medicine. In the fall of 1945, at Dr. Cunningham's instigation, a group of about 25 industrial physicians from Ontario and Quebec met at Brantford to discuss common problems in industrial health, and this original meeting has grown into an annual occasion between the Quebec Industrial Medical Association and the Ontario Medical Association, Industrial Medical Section, which is now attended by physicians from across Canada.

In many ways he was a shy and retiring man, but he had a great compassion for his fellow men, and to his junior colleagues he was always a source of inspiration and a friend to whom one's problems always seemed important. He eschewed the many honours which came his way, but the presentation of a citation to him by his many colleagues and students on the occasion of his retirement from government service was always a source of great pride. The Industrial Medical Section of the Ontario Medical Association has established a prize in his honour, the 'Cunningham Prize', which is awarded annually to the best student in the Diploma of Industrial Hygiene course, which he himself had done so much to foster and support.

Dr. Cunningham is survived by his widow, formerly Maude Agnes Scott, two sons, Dr. Nelson Cunningham and Mr. John Cunningham of Toronto, and a daughter, Gail (Mrs. Robert Briggs), also of Toronto.

JOHN R. BROWN

#### DR. J. GRANT CUNNINGHAM AN APPRECIATION

On Thursday, October 7, Grant Cunningham passed away after a lengthy illness. It is not often that it can truthfully be said that one man has done so much for his fellow man. This is the way I look at Dr. Cunningham's life work.

Dr. Cunningham graduated in medicine from the University of Toronto in 1915. He enlisted and served overseas in the First World War in the Royal Army Medical Corps.

In 1919 the National Research Council of Canada formed a Committee on Industrial Fatigue. This committee was responsible for industrial hygiene being taught in the University of Toronto. Dr. Cunningham's first appointment in the University of Toronto, several years before the opening of the School of Hygiene, was that of Lecturer in Industrial Hygiene in the Department of Hygiene and Preventive Medicine for the session 1920-1921. Thus he was closely associated with Dr. J. G. FitzGerald, not only in the teaching activities of the Department, but later in the development of the School of Hygiene. He was actively engaged as Lecturer and Associate Professor and since 1958 as Professor, a part-time appointment. He retired in 1962. On the occasion of his retirement, the Council of the School of Hygiene, on motion of Dr. J. R. Brown seconded by Professor N. E. McKinnon, passed a resolution that the thanks of the School be extended to Dr. Cunningham in appreciation of his 40 years of conscientious endeavour in the teaching of industrial hygiene to the students of the School.

In 1920 the Division of Industrial Hygiene was established in the Ontario Department of Health. This was the first Division in Canada and the third in North America (Ohio, 1913; New York, 1914). Subsequently a large number of such services have been developed in Canada and the United States. Also many universities in both countries have added industrial hygiene to their curricula.

For years Dr. Cunningham was Chairman of the Silicosis Referee Board. Because of his efforts and leadership a co-operative approach on common problems has been maintained with other agencies.

The development of industrial medical services in industry was always one of his main objectives. His prime consideration has been the application of preventive medical procedures to the adult working population. He was responsible for the development of the Civil Service Health Centres in the Ontario Government.

During this time Dr. Cunningham earned the respect and love of all those who came in close contact with industrial medicine; this includes management as well as physicians. My first contact was in 1934, when I was asked to start a medical department in an industry in Toronto. I well remember talking to Grant. The advice he gave me at that time and many times since has helped me to avoid the pitfalls that waylay the physician practising in industry. I know that many of my colleagues have had a similar experience.

During World War II Dr. Cunningham was very active in the war effort. In 1941 at Winnipeg he was appointed Chairman of a new committee for the C.M.A., the Committee of Industrial Medicine. Through this committee he set up standards for wartime employment. He was instrumental in printing a booklet on these standards to guide industry at this time. He was a member of the Personnel Procurement and Assignment Board, a Federal project. In 1943 he presented to a select committee of the House of Commons a report on the relationship of industrial medicine to health insurance. During the War and since—on into the fifties—he arranged refresher courses for industrial physicians. From 1948 to 1958 he represented industrial medicine as the appointee of the C.M.A. on the World Health Organization.

He was the father of industrial medicine in Canada. He had a quiet and unassuming manner in going about starting new projects. In the fall of 1944 he contacted a number of industrial physicians to get an opinion as to forming a Quebec and Ontario Industrial Medical Association. At his suggestion about 25 of us, representing the two Provinces, met in Brantford, and the present healthy Ontario and Quebec association was formed.

Just a few weeks before his death Dr. Cunningham was honoured by the University of Toronto when he was awarded the degree of M.D. in recognition of 50 years of devoted service. He will be remembered as an officer and a gentleman; a teacher and an administrator; and a consultant on world health problems who represented Canada with distinction.

Surviving are his widow, the former Maude Agnes Scott; two sons, Dr. Nelson Cunningham and Mr. John Cunningham; a daughter, Mrs. Robert Briggs, and 10 grandchildren, all of Toronto.

HAROLD M. HARRISON